

Handout # 1

Data Collection Methods

Method	Overall Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
Questionnaires, Surveys, Checklists	Used to quickly and/or easily get a lot of information from people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can complete anonymously ▪ Inexpensive to administer ▪ Easy to compare and analyze ▪ Can administer to many people ▪ Can get a lot of data ▪ Many sample questionnaires already exist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Might not get specific feedback needed ▪ Wording can bias responses ▪ Are impersonal ▪ May need sampling expert for surveys ▪ Does not get the full story.
Interviews	Used to fully understand someone's impressions or experiences or to learn more about their answers to questionnaires.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a full range and depth of information ▪ Develop a relationship with target audience ▪ Can be flexible with the target audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can take a significant amount of time ▪ Can be hard to analyze and compare ▪ Can be costly ▪ Interviewer can bias client's responses.
Focus groups	Explore a topic in depth through group discussion (e.g., about reactions to an experience or suggestion, understanding common complaints)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Efficient way to get common impressions ▪ Can be an efficient way to get a greater range and depth of information in a short time ▪ Useful in evaluation and marketing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be hard to analyze responses ▪ Need good facilitator ▪ Can be difficult to schedule.

Adapted from: National Cancer Institute. (2006). Using What Works: Adapting Evidence-based Programs to Fit Your Needs. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services / National Institutes of Health